

**Department of Commerce
Occupational Safety and Health Program
Fiscal Year 2004 Annual Agency Report**



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Department of Commerce

Occupational Safety and Health Report

Fiscal Year:	2004
Name of Agency Department	Department of Commerce Office of Occupational Safety and Health, Office of Human Resources Management
Address	1401 Constitution Avenue, NW Room 5111 Washington, DC 20230
Number of employees covered by this report	37,641
Name of individual responsible for the Department Of Commerce Occupational Safety and Health Program Designated Agency Safety and Health Official	Otto J. Wolff Chief Financial Officer and Assistant Secretary for Administration 1401 Constitution Avenue, NW Room 5830 Washington, DC 20230 (202) 482-4951
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Introduction. This report provides the Occupational Safety and Health Administration with a review of the Department of Commerce's Safety Program for Fiscal Year 2004. The Department realized great improvement in the effectiveness of its occupational safety and health program. Additional resources were provided to programs to allow for an assertive focus on preventing workplace injuries and illnesses. There remain challenges and the Department has established goals to improve in those areas. Senior leadership is focused on this program and is providing necessary resources to make the program successful. In Fiscal Year 2005 the Department will focus on four objectives. These objectives include: reducing workplace injuries and illnesses, meeting Safety, Health, and Return-to-Employment goals, implementing new and updated training programs, and improving efficiency of data management.

Statistics. The Department of Commerce Occupational Safety and Health program covered the Department's workforce and workplaces worldwide to include our shipboard, aviation and international workforces. The number of personnel employed in 2004 was 37,641.

The Department reported 522 injury and illness cases in Fiscal Year 2004, 225 of which were lost time cases. This represents a 4.4 percent decrease of injury and illness claims and a 13.5 percent decrease of lost time claims from 2003. The injury and illness case rate for Fiscal Year 2004 was 1.39 and the lost time case rate was 0.60.

The Department incurred two occupational fatalities in Fiscal Year 2004; both were Bureau of the Census, Field Representatives, involved in separate motor vehicle accidents. Police reports indicate that in one of the fatal accidents, the victim was wearing a seat belt, however the investigating officers could not determine if the victim in the second accident was wearing a seat belt. Figure 1 shows fatal accident data for previous years.

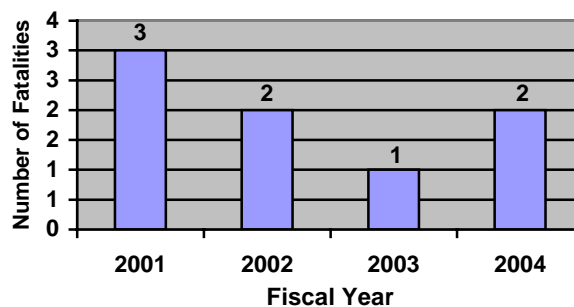


Figure 1 Total number of fatalities for the past four fiscal years.

Department workers' compensation costs for Fiscal Year 2004 were \$14,746,201. This is a decrease of 1.2 percent from \$14,931,466 in Fiscal Year 2003. Figure 2 shows previous fiscal year costs.

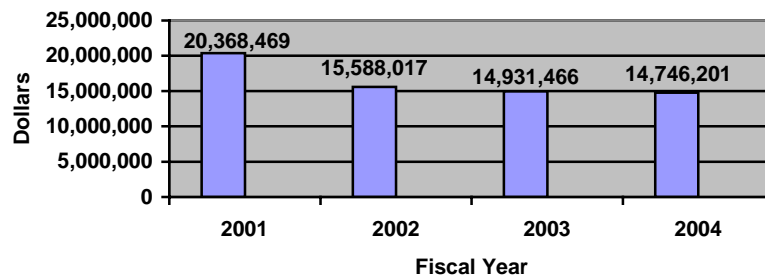


Figure 2 Workers' compensation costs for the past four fiscal years.

Continuation of Pay costs for Fiscal Year 2004 increased from Fiscal Year 2003. Figure 3 shows the costs for previous years.

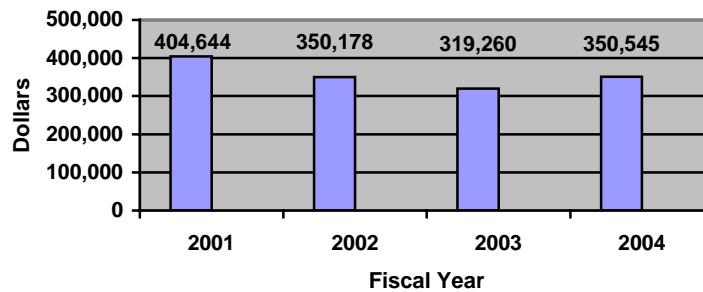


Figure 3 Continuation of Pay costs for the past four fiscal years.

The main causes of injuries within the Department changed slightly in Fiscal Year 2004 from those experienced in Fiscal Year 2003. Figure 4 shows a break down of causes of injuries from Fiscal Year 2004. There are some key findings from this data. Injuries from being struck by an object were the most prevalent type of injury and represented 28 percent of those reported. This is also an increase from Fiscal Year 2003, when only 22 percent of total injuries were in this category. Injuries from slips and falls were the second most frequently occurring and represented 26 percent of total injuries. This is down from 31 percent in Fiscal Year 2003. Exertion injuries represented 25 percent of total injuries and were unchanged from Fiscal Year 2003.

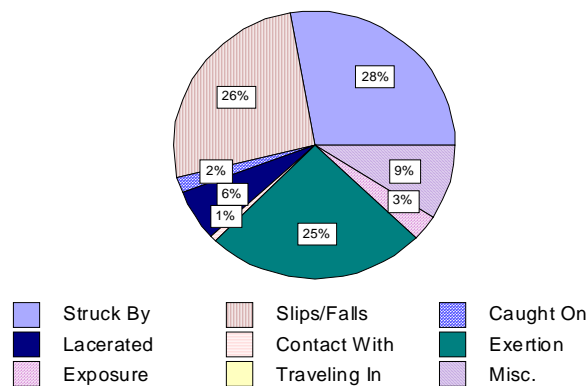


Figure 4 Injury Type As A Percentage of Total Injuries for Fiscal Year 2004.

Safety, Health, and Return to Employment Initiative. During Fiscal Year 2004 the Department met and exceeded the Safety, Health, and Return-to-Employment (SHARE) goals of increased timeliness for filings, reduced lost time and total case rates. Table 1 provides a complete look at targets and goals for Fiscal Year 2004.

	Fiscal Year 2003 Baselines	Fiscal Year 2004 Targets	Fiscal Year 2004 Performance
Lost Production Days	20.9	20.7	22
CA-1/CA-2 Timeliness	34.0 %	35.7 %	40.0 %
Total Case Rate	1.46	1.42	1.39
Lost Time Case Rates	0.70	0.68	0.60

Table 1 SHARE performance for Fiscal Year 04 compared to Fiscal Year 04 targets.

The Department received the Gold Star award from the Department of Labor for improved timeliness of reporting in the third and fourth quarters of Fiscal Year 2004. This improvement was achieved through increased awareness of the program and training on workers' compensation procedures for employees and supervisors. New supervisor training included a module on the importance of timely filings as well as instructional materials to aid supervisors in decision making. An initiative was created to improve and standardize workers' compensation training at all Department bureaus. This involved observing existing training, providing standard training materials, and conducting informal train-the-trainer sessions with collateral duty safety officers and safety points of contact. To further improve timeliness performance as well as incident analysis, the Department worked to obtain the Safety and Health Information Management System (SHIMS).

Despite decreases in occupational injuries and illness, including lost time incidents, the Department did not meet the Fiscal Year 2004 SHARE goal for lost production days. These findings are in conflict with other SHARE statistics and the Department is working to identify the cause(s) by reviewing incidents investigations.

Motor Vehicle/Seat Belt Safety. The Commerce Department's Policy Statement on Increasing Seat Belt Usage was in effect in Fiscal Year 2004. A copy of this policy is included as Attachment 1. This policy requires Commerce employees to wear seat belts while on official government business and encourages employees to wear them while off duty. It also strongly urges employees to use child restraint systems for their children and to encourage other family members to always wear seat belts.

At the Census Bureau, Director Louis Kincannon committed the bureau to a safe driving initiative in October 2002 aimed at reducing injuries from car accidents. The Census Bureau and the Field Directorate further advanced this initiative by:

- Expanding field representatives training in safe driving techniques.

- Field representatives received frequent safety tips to remind them about the mandatory use of seat belts while operating motor vehicles in the performance of official duties.
- Observing employee driving behavior is now part of the annual field representative's supervisory observations.
- Field manuals and training materials were updated to include specific language about the requirement to wear seat belts while operating a motor vehicle and that failure to wear seat belts may result in disciplinary action.
- A safe driving checklist was added to the Observation/Evaluation Checklist for field representatives used by senior representatives and supervisors to evaluate driving skills and identify any unsafe driving acts.
- Several articles on motor vehicle safety and seat belt usage have been published in the Census Bureau's publications for employees. Sample articles are provided as Attachments 2 and 3.
- The Census Bureau's Director's Award for Safe Driving was presented to the New York Regional Office for having no vehicular accidents in 2004.

At the National Institute for Standards and Technology employees are reminded to wear seat belts as they enter the facilities either verbally by the guard force or by signs. The guard force at both the Gaithersburg, Maryland and Boulder, Colorado facilities have the authority to issue citations for failure to wear seat belts. Defensive Driving seminars were provided at two major training and awareness events held at the Gaithersburg facility. The National Institute for Standards and Technology is a certified member of the Maryland T-SAFE Project. Both T-SAFE and the Maryland Department of Transportation had booths at the annual training and awareness event at Gaithersburg, Maryland in June 2004.

Several initiatives were undertaken by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration in Fiscal Year 2004 to improve motor vehicle safety and encourage seat belt usage. Most offices with federally owned vehicles provided motor vehicle safety training emphasizing seat belt usage. In addition to the annual inspections by the General Services Administration the National Ocean Service added a requirement in their Safety Action Plan that all vehicles are to be inspected once a year to ensure each vehicle is maintained for safe operation.

Occupational Safety and Health Training. Extensive safety and occupational health training was conducted in Fiscal Year 2004 throughout the Department. Selected examples include:

- At the National Institute of Standards and Technology a major safety and occupational health training and awareness event, Safety Day, was held at their Gaithersburg, MD facility. This event included speakers covering a wide range of topics, including the White House SHARE initiative. Eighteen vendors demonstrated a variety of products and services. Over 500 employees attended the event, including the Department's Designated Agency Safety and Health Official, Assistant Secretary Otto J. Wolff.

- Incident investigation and root cause analysis training was provided to all supervisors of the National Institute of Standards and Technology Director of Administration and Chief Financial Organization, which included 83 individuals. This training was specifically tailored to the organization, and was provided by the Maryland Chapter of the National Safety Council. A wide range of additional training was conducted at National Institute of Standards and Technology facilities in Fiscal Year 2004. This training included radiation safety, overhead crane operation, Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation, Occupational Safety and Health Administration's Ten-hour Construction Safety Course, and an enhanced New Employee Safety Orientation.
- The Census Bureau participated in several divisional All-Hands meetings at which presentations communicated the message that "every" employee is a "safety inspector" for reporting hazards. During these presentations, the importance of reporting unsafe or unhealthful conditions was emphasized, and employees were instructed in the use of the Bureau's Facility Complaint Tracking System (FACTS) for the prompt reporting and abatement of hazards. Employees were also told about the costs of workplace injuries and illnesses, and were provided with recommendations for working safely.
- The Census Bureau also provided training for regional supervisors and administrators, which focused on the financial, productivity, and human costs of workplace injuries. This training also included supervisor responsibility to control costs and promote a safe and healthful work place. Through interactive distance-learning broadcasts, all twelve regional Census Bureau offices participated in this training.
- At the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Marine and Aircraft Operations Group a one-week conference focusing on maritime and aviation safety was held. Safety training was also provided to seagoing personnel to meet International Maritime Organization and U.S. Coast Guard requirements.
- Additional training conducted at National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration included the development of a web-based Safety Refresher Course for the National Weather Service and a newly initiated Safety Week for the National Marine Sanctuaries to be held in March each year. Safety Week training included intense hands-on instruction and drills such as man overboard exercises, vessel evacuation drills, and emergency response to earthquakes and fires.
- At the Department's headquarters in the Herbert C. Hoover Building safety training was provided to occupants in conjunction with the Occupant Emergency Plan. This training included Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation, use of Automated External Defibrillators, use of evacuation chairs for those needing assistance to vacate the building, and fire extinguisher training. Shelter-In-Place exercises were also conducted for building occupants in conjunction with the Occupant Emergency Plan. Safety training provided to employees of the Office of Building Management included a two-day respiratory protection course, a two-day general Occupational Safety and Health course, and a one-day hazardous waste management course. Staff of the Office of Occupational Safety and Health received professional development training on respiratory protection, hazardous waste management, hearing protection, ergonomics, personal protective equipment, and

stress. Staff members attended conferences and expositions for the National Safety Council, the American Industrial Hygiene Association, and the Federal Workers' Compensation Program.

Occupational Safety and Health Program Accomplishments and Initiatives. Numerous Occupational Safety and Health program accomplishments and initiatives were implemented throughout the Department of Commerce in Fiscal Year 2004 to address accident trends and increase safety awareness. Examples of these accomplishments and initiatives include:

- Quarterly Commerce Safety and Health Council meetings were held with the Chief Financial Officer/Assistant Secretary for Administration, Mr. Otto J. Wolff, as the chair. Mr. Wolff is also the Department's Designated Agency Safety and Health Official. Safety and health managers and senior management from the major bureaus actively participated in these council meetings to resolve critical issues, develop new initiatives, and establish goals and objectives.
- Oversight audits were conducted at four major Commerce bureaus and at Commerce headquarters to assess the effectiveness of programs and determine the level of compliance with applicable requirements. The audits targeted major programs areas and used the Voluntary Protection Program standards. A comprehensive Report of Findings was prepared and provided to the bureau managers following the audits. The programs were well implemented and in compliance with applicable standards.
- A safety and health flier was inserted in the March 18th Statement of Earnings and Leave for all 37,641 employees. The flier promulgated a commitment to providing a safe work environment, preventing workplace accidents, and minimizing illnesses.
- A new safety policy was developed and issued at National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. The new safety policy, signed by Under Secretary for Oceans and Atmosphere Vice Admiral Conrad C. Lautenbacher, Jr., stressed the importance of making safety a priority in National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration workplaces. This policy also encouraged each manager and employee to take responsibility for their safety, and held Administration leadership accountable for proactively working to prevent hazards. The policy assigned responsibilities for various aspects of the program, ensured that training is fully implemented throughout the organization, and required that program responsibilities be included in the performance plans of managers and employees. The new policy is provided as Attachment 4.
- A web-based accident/illness reporting system was developed and implemented at National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Weather Service. It will be expanded to all of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration in Fiscal Year 2005. The new reporting system assists managers in analyzing the major causes of accidents/illnesses, identifies locations where significant numbers of accidents/illnesses are occurring, and aids in reducing workers' compensation costs.

- At the Census Bureau a major initiative was undertaken to increase seat belt usage and promote driver safety awareness. Census Bureau Director Louis Kincannon issued a safe driving initiative in October 2002 aimed at reducing fatalities and injuries from car accidents. In 2004 the Census Bureau Safety Office and the Field Directorate further advanced this initiative by providing field representatives with additional training in safe driving techniques and regular safety tips, including reminding them that the use of seat belts are mandatory for drivers while on official duty. Field manuals and training materials were updated to include specific language about the requirement to wear seat belts while operating a motor vehicle and that failure to do so may result in disciplinary action. A safe driving checklist was added to the Observation/Evaluation Checklist for field representatives, which is used by senior representatives and supervisors to evaluate driving skills and identify unsafe driving acts.

The National Institute for Standards and Technology implemented several major programs and initiatives in Fiscal Year 2004. Examples of these initiatives include:

- The Health Physics Group performed an audit of the research nuclear reactor radiation safety program as required by 10 CFR Part 20 and prepared a report of findings. The program received praise by an outside Safety Audit Committee for an effective and committed radiation safety program. The Health Physics Group also participated in two inspections conducted by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission at the Gaithersburg, Maryland facility; no actions items were identified during the inspections.
- A new Hazardous Materials Emergency Response Vehicle was placed in service at the Gaithersburg, Maryland facility to respond to incidents involving the release of hazardous materials. The new vehicle is equipped with Level A and B protective suits, chemical and biological detection equipment, radiation monitoring meters, decontamination equipment, and other emergency response equipment.

Major Resources Allocated to the Occupational Safety and Health Program. Funding for the Department-wide implementation of the Department of Labor's Safety and Health Information Management System (SHIMS) program was approved in Fiscal Year 2004. This web-based system automates the workers' compensation process and serves as a database for Occupational Safety and Health Administration required injury and illness recordkeeping. The use of SHIMS will aid the Department in meeting SHARE goals as well as identifying significant trends and patterns in workplace injuries and illnesses.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration has allocated three days per year as "safety stand down days" aboard all ships. The three days are used to address specific safety concerns aboard ship, conduct safety training, practice risk management, and increase awareness. At the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Aircraft Operations Center a centralized hazardous materials tracking system was developed and implemented. The new system will track hazardous materials from the time they are distributed until they are picked up for disposal. The system is intended to reduce quantities, significantly lower fire risk, and reduce potential exposure.

An incident investigation and root cause analysis program was instituted within the Director of Administration and Chief Financial Officer organization at National Institute for Standard and Technology. The new program is utilized in the investigation of major incidents. Incident investigation and root cause analysis training was provided to all supervisors using specific examples of investigations and analyses, which were conducted in Fiscal Year 2003.

The Department of Commerce has Automated External Defibrillators throughout the Herbert C. Hoover Building.

In Fiscal Year 2004 Automated External Defibrillators were installed at the National Institute of Standards and Technology Gaithersburg, Maryland, Boulder, Colorado and Kauai, Hawaii facilities. Required programs for the operation and management of these important life savings devices were also developed and implemented.

Also in Fiscal Year 2004 the Census Bureau placed Automated External Defibrillators at key locations. Specific locations included the eight buildings at the Census Bureau headquarters in Suitland, Maryland. In addition to the procuring and installing the devices the Census Bureau trained over 250 employees in their use.

Occupational Safety and Health Goals, Plans and Objectives Planned for Fiscal Year 2005 and Beyond. In Fiscal Year 2005 and the following years the Department will continue its efforts to meet and exceed the four goals under the SHARE initiative. The Department will focus on reducing Lost Production Days.

The Department will continue its efforts to return employees on long-term compensation to work thereby reducing long-term workers' compensation cases and lowering overall compensation costs. Each long-term compensation case will be thoroughly reviewed and updated medical reports will be appropriately examined to determine whether employees are able to return to work. Additionally, the Department will also work with the bureaus to identify light duty work for those employees who cannot resume working at full capacity.

At the Census Bureau, a new \$330 million headquarters facility is being constructed that will replace seven 60 year old buildings now being used. To ensure the new facility meets current safety and health standards, the Census Safety Office actively participates as a member of the Census New Building Coordination Team.

At the Census Bureau's National Processing Center in Jeffersonville, Indiana the Safety Office is developing a new web-based interactive training program on the Hazard Communication standard. The goal of this program is to ensure employees are familiar with the major components of the standard. The training will cover the requirements for Material Safety Data Sheets, proper handling and disposal, and actions to take in the event of an accidental exposure. The training will have a test at the end. The issuance of a completion certificate will be based upon successful completion of the test.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration have planned several major goals and objectives for Fiscal Year 2005 and beyond. Examples of these initiatives include:

- The development of a Safety Program Evaluation Tool to measure management, leadership, and employee involvement.
- The establishment of committees and councils at all facilities
- The development of specific safety performance measures for all employees.
- To revise and improve it's New Employee Safety Orientation Training Program.

The National Institute for Standards and Technology has established a goal to reduce lost workday frequency and severity by 25 percent from the previous five-year average. New employees will receive four hours of training during the first month of their employment. All employees will receive at least four hours of training per year.

Summary.

This report was intended to provide the Acting Director of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration with a roll up the accomplishments of the Department of Commerce in the area of occupational safety and health for Fiscal Year 2004. The commitment, dedication, and effort of our employees are evident in all that we do. In Fiscal Year 2005 our leaders are committed to further reducing accidents and injuries, exceeding the Department of Labor SHARE goals, and reducing Workers' Compensation costs. That commitment includes conducting training for employees, supervisors, managers and executives, implementing automation initiatives to improve effectiveness and efficiency, developing a strategic plan for occupational safety and health, improving evacuation procedures for disabled employees, and awareness efforts focused on improving the health of our work force. Fiscal Year 2005 holds a great deal of promise. The Department's report for 2005 will demonstrate its commitment to and fulfillment of providing a safe and healthful working environment for the men and women of the Department of Commerce.